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ABSTRACT

This document chronicles the evolution of the Norwalk (Ohio) Public Library (established in 1866) from a small collection in an upper room in the Old Mansion Block building to a Carnegie facility which has been renovated to meet today's needs, including accessibility to the handicapped. Funding for the first reading room was provided by the Alert Club, an organization supporting Civil War Soldiers. Highlights of the report include the story of Norwalk's successful pursuit of a Carnegie grant in 1902, the contributions of various library directors down through the years, and other milestones in funding (local tax support became a source of income in the 1930s) and services (the first summer children's programming was offered in 1925). The study also shows how the library began to prepare for "the information highway" by becoming automated in 1993 with a Galaxy computer system. The appendices contain a copy of a piece of correspondence from Andrew Carnegie, a floor plan, and several copies of photographs, newspaper clippings, and board meeting minutes. (Contains 44 references.) (BEW)

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# NORWALK PUBLIC LIBRARY:

# A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW FROM 1866 TO 1994

A Master's Research Paper submitted to the
Kent State University School of Library Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Master of Library Science

by

Sarah A. Contreras

December, 1994

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# NORWALK PUBLIC LIBRARY:
# A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW
# FROM 1866 TO 1994

This is a historical overview of the Norwalk Public Library from 1866 to 1994. This research paper documents the historical development from a small library in an upper room in the Old Mansion Block building to a Carnegie building which has been renovated to meet today's needs and is accessible to the physically challenged.

After the Civil War the citizens of Norwalk soon realized the great need to offer something else for recreation for its citizens, especially the men returning from war. The expanding population with its own cultural and social views helped to determine how the library was organized and what services were offered.

The study shows the library is preparing to meet "the Information Highway." The Norwalk Public Library went on-line on December 1, 1993-- using a complete computerized checkout system and on-line catalog by Galaxy. It is a library for everyone from the preschool to the business community. The Board of Trustees strongly endorses the Library Bill of Rights.

Master's Research Paper by

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M.L.S., Kent State University, 1994

Approved by

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The writer would like to thank all the individuals and organizations of Norwalk, Huron County, and the surrounding areas who have generously given gifts or bequests to the Norwalk Public Library over the years.

The writer would like to apologize for not listing all the contributors in this paper. The people of this community have definitely demonstrated that the library means a great deal to them through their gifts and bequests and words of encouragement.

The writer would also like to thank the Firelands Historical Society and the local historian, Henry Timman for preserving the historical past.

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

The first concept of a library established in Norwalk, Ohio dates back to the spring of 1851. The "Sons of Temperance" served only men who were willing to pay a dollar a year for the privilege of taking out one book each week; this organization existed over a period of ten years. In 1866, Col. C. P. Wickham called a town meeting to establish a library association. The objectives of the association were declared to be: "Providing for the people, especially the youth of Norwalk, additional means for mental improvement thru the agency of a library, reading room, public lectures, and other kindred instrumentalities." (Edwards 1953, 3) The organization was then given the name of the Young Men's Library and Reading Room Association.

The Alert Club which aided Norwalk soldiers at the front during the Civil War and private citizens provided funds for some of the library's early financing. The public library established in 1866 was housed in several different places until 1899. In April of 1866, the first library rooms were on the second floor of the building where the Gift Gallery Inc. (14 W. Main St.) now operates. The library soon outgrew its space; so it was moved in 1878 to the second floor of the Gallup Block now occupied by Freeman & Freeman law offices. In 1882, another move was made to the second floor of the Whittlesey Block where the Peking House (2 W. Main St.) now operates. In 1899, the lot where the present

library building stands was purchased at West Main and Case Avenue. The Dr. William Kittredge house remained on the lot and was used as a library and museum until 1903-04 when the present library building was constructed (Timman 1983, 81).

Norwalk's Carnegie library is one of the oldest buildings in Ohio still in service. A grant for $15,000 was given for the library building from Andrew Carnegie, who built many libraries across the country. Early newspaper accounts of the Carnegie gift credit an Afro-American named Benjamin F. Stewart, a town barber, who once worked for Andrew Carnegie at the huge steelmill at Homestead, Pennsylvania. He reportedly saved Carnegie's life during a very dangerous strike, and later settled in Norwalk (Harvey 1986, 9). When supporters of the library decided to request funds from Andrew Carnegie, Mr. Stewart sent a message along with it. Through Stewart's appeal, Andrew Carnegie became interested in Norwalk. The only stipulation Mr. Carnegie required was that City Council pass a resolution agreeing to provide a suitable site for the building and maintain a free public library at the cost of not less than $1500.00 a year for the town of Norwalk.

The present building was completed and opened to the public on May 10, 1905. The Young Men's Library and Reading Room Association had exclusive use of the upper floor and shared the use of all the other rooms and conveniences of the basement with the Firelands Historical Society except the north room which was used as the Society's museum (Edwards 1953, 9).

In July 1953, Frances Edwards (Director from 1948-1963) wrote

History of the Norwalk Public Library which covered 1866 to 1953. Seville S. Young (employee of the Norwalk Public Library from 1950-1952) submitted a paper entitled "History of the Norwalk Public Library From 1853-1927" as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Library Science from Western Reserve University in August, 1954. Many innovations and renovations have happened since then. It is time for the history of the library to be updated.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to depict the library's growth from a reading room and library to an automated information center. The primary purpose was to trace the development of the Norwalk Public Library from its beginning in 1866 to 1994. Other objectives include 1) to add to the present historical documentation of the Norwalk Public Library for the sake of knowledge, 2) to investigate how the involvement of Andrew Carnegie and the people of Norwalk has made an impact on our lives today; 3) to satisfy the personal curiosity of the author, who grew up in the community, about the story behind the distinguished portrait of Andrew Carnegie hanging on the wall on the library's main floor. This study provided a chance to relive history and to gain a better understanding of the past.

Definitions

Academy - In this paper this word referred to the Whittlesey Academy for Arts and Sciences.

Association - In this paper this single word referred to the Young Men's Library and Reading Rooms Association or YML&RRA which was founded to establish a library and a meeting place for the veterans of the Civil War on Jan. 31, 1866.

Association Libraries - They were the first libraries organized in Ohio that were private libraries in which a group of individuals would pool their funds or subscribe to shares in a proposed library. Only members who paid a fee or subscription were entitled to receive books.

Bibliofile - A computer program which allowed one to put catalog records into machine-readable form. It was absolutely necessary for sharing materials with other data bases, for automated circulation, and/or cataloging on computer.

Block - This term was used to refer to buildings only and not a city block.

Retrospective Conversion - A person has gone from print to machine-readable form. That process was created by machine-readable records for all library materials according to standards set by Library of Congress. Bibliofile cataloging allowed one to do this type of conversion.

Society - This term stood for the Firelands' Historical Society in this paper.

# CHAPTER II

## LITERATURE REVIEW

To obtain a historical overview, material was researched on the life of Andrew Carnegie and his impact on public libraries in the United States, especially, the Norwalk Public Library.

LISA and ERIC (databases) provided the necessary citations as did sources from the Norwalk Public Library collection.

The public library was already an established institution by 1898. Earlier proprietary and subscription libraries were staffed by volunteers of similar educational and cultural levels. These had given way to stronger institutions supported by public taxes and open to the public. The advancement of the social libraries and public library growth were contributed to the overwhelming need for self-enrichment and the expansion of free public education. (Bobinski 1969, 4).

Andrew Carnegie was born on November 25, 1835 in Dunfermline, Scotland. Will and Margaret Carnegie and their children, Andrew and Tom, arrived in America on July 15, 1848; Andrew was 12 years old. His family settled in Allegheny City, Pennsylvania, (now part of Pittsburgh). They hoped America would offer a chance for a fresh start to make a decent living and to recover their pride that was lost due to years of little or no employment.

Because Andrew's life experiences covered two periods, before and after mechanization, his behavior constantly displayed an uncertainty rooted in his exposure to the old world of Scotland and the new industrial world of America. Harold Livesay described Carnegie as a businessman who's mastery of the techniques of

investment, management, technological improvement, marketing, and economic principles that formed the core of modern industrial practices. Carnegie's attitudes toward politics, society, culture, and business demonstrated the ideas he had absorbed in Scotland. Carnegie perfected many business techniques that were soon adapted by other industries to fit their own managerial needs.

Life in America has been described by the term "the American dream" - the belief that anyone can rise above his background, however modest, and through hard work, honesty, and prudence achieve positions of power and influence. The people who populated America tried to achieve "the American dream." Andrew Carnegie's transformation from a poor immigrant to "the richest man in the world" was considered unquestionable evidence of the dream's validity. Carnegie's opinions were widely shared by many Americans. He believed that individual achievement improved society as a whole, and exhibited progress, and that the political system made feasible the remarkable growth of industrial economy. He adopted the creed of rugged individualism, but did much to start the era of impersonal corporate bureaucracy (Livesay, 1975).

Andrew Carnegie's first concept of libraries started in his childhood. His father, a weaver in Dunfermline, Scotland, established a book collection at work with his colleagues' contributions. The collection eventually became a circulating town library. When he moved to Pennsylvania, Andrew used a private library in Allegheny City, where he decided to someday build libraries (Cherry 1981, 184).

Andrew Carnegie considered the library a wise investment. By

1917 Carnegie had given some $41,000,000 for the construction of 1,679 public library buildings across the United States. The Norwalk Public Library was one of one hundred and five libraries built in Ohio. Carnegie agreed to Norwalk's grant of $15,000 on February 2, 1903 (Miller 1943, 31).

Carnegie was a conservative, rigidly moralistic, and tough-minded individual. At Carnegie's insistence any town or village which received his libraries obligate themselves to their continued support, clearly showed those traits. His book, Gospel of Wealth, also centered on the means by which to achieve success by helping themselves. In an address delivered in 1894, Carnegie revealed his motivation for funding thousands of libraries when he said, "the result of knowledge [gleaned from libraries] is to make men not violent revolutionists, but cautious evolutionists: not destroyers, but careful improvers" (Harris 1973, 2513).

The Carnegie phenomenon in American history and philanthropy was the most important movement in society since the founding of the public school. Carnegie believed that one could advance the education of society by providing free access to books. He also believed the upper class should use their fortunes to help the masses. Carnegie opposed charity but provided educational opportunities instead.

Andrew Carnegie and James Bertram, his secretary, greatly influenced the architectural world of libraries. Besides the community's commitment to financially support the public library, they also were requested to construct their building according to one of Bertram's four basic plans. The four basis plans were the

shapes of a parallelogram, a square, a T-shape or round with a minimum amount of partitions. This provided greater accessibility for patrons and staff, more economical to staff, and also for security. (The staff could see if the books were being defaced or stolen.) The plans called for economy of space and utility. The exterior plans were left to the community to develop.

Bertram wrote Notes on Library Buildings to assist local architects with the building requirements of a Carnegie library. This booklet accompanied each application for a library. The Notes called for a variety of rooms. The adult and children's reading rooms and a combined reference and librarians' room were on the first floor; a lecture room and a staff room were located in the basement. Upon receiving an application and building plans, Bertram checked to make sure space was not wasted and the requirements for a Carnegie funded library were met.

Andrew Carnegie pioneered library upkeep and funding for staff through public and municipal obligations. The need for effective management of the public libraries led the Carnegie Institute of Technology to develop the necessary training for professional librarianship. Most libraries reported annually the allocation of money for books, salaries, and other expenses to Bertram, as required. It was a smart and efficient way to insure the support for libraries (Deitch 1984, 16-19).

Carnegie, an immigrant himself, realized they needed something more than just education; so he built all-purpose libraries which included recreation and social activities. "The American Dream" was obtainable by advancing one's education with books. It was

also a service organization providing available materials and services. The library was a landmark as much as the post office, the bank, and other public offices were. They connected the community's identity with something it respected.

# CHAPTER III

## HISTORICAL METHODOLOGY

### Procedures and Design

The following procedures were used in this investigation.

A preliminary study and general review of literature on Andrew Carnegie and his impact on public libraries in the United States were completed for background information.

An investigative study was conducted into all available material relevant to the history of the Norwalk Public Library. An article written by James E. Dixon entitled "Milestones - The Story of the Young Men's Library and Reading Room Association" was discovered that related to the library's origin. The article disclosed names of people and organizations that contributed to the establishment of the Norwalk Public Library.

Primary and Secondary sources explored:

1) Minutes of library board meetings (1906-1993).

2) Norwalk Reflector (local newspaper founded in 1830) in print and on microfilm.

3) Historical monographs on the Norwalk area.

4) The Firelands Museum and its Laning-Young Research Center.

5) Firelands Pioneer - (Firelands Historical Society publishes this historical magazine.)

6) Correspondence to Andrew Carnegie for the building of the Norwalk Public Library.

7) Vertical files at the library (clippings and other material relating to the Norwalk Public Library).

8) Conversations with past and present board members of the Norwalk Public Library.

9) Conversations with past and present employees of the Norwalk Public Library.

# CHAPTER IV

# NORWALK PUBLIC LIBRARY: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW FROM 1866 TO 1994

## Origin of the Library

In the 1830s the Norwalk Academy, a private educational institute, was established. It soon became one of the outstanding schools in the West and almost as well known as Yale or Harvard. Due to its status, Norwalk grew to be an "Academy town" with the major portion of its economy built on the business generating from the school. By 1850, four other educational institutions were established. In May 1853, the Whittlesey Academy of Arts and Sciences was formed; the Academy soon became the center for educational and cultural activities of Norwalk and the surrounding area. The history of the Norwalk Public Library started when the Whittlesey Academy of Arts and Sciences was established. The Academy was named in honor of Elisha Whittlesey of Canfield, Ohio, one of the early proprietors of the town plat of Norwalk.

The Academy's original constitution provided for the office of Librarian. In 1855, the first library was started in accordance with the rules laid down in the constitution. The duties of the librarian were in Article VII of the constitution.

> It shall be the duty of the Librarian to arrange and keep in charge all books and periodicals belonging to the Reading Room & Library of the Academy, and all articles designed for the cabinet of Curiosities; to attend on the drawing of books at such time as may be hereafter specified; to post up conspicuously a copy of the bylaws pertaining to the Library in the Reading Room, and attend to the enforcement of the same; to provide a list of all volumes in the Library and note regularly the place of each; and to keep a correct account of all moneys used for the purchase of books, periodicals, or specimens for the use of the Academy (The Firelands Pioneer

1983, T.S. Vol. IV, 8-9).

History of the Library

During the years of the Civil War, the talents and the energies of the town had been turned totally to support the war effort. When the troops began to return home after the war, a need for more recreation than the town provided began to be obvious. On January 24, 1866 the first meeting to establish a library in Norwalk was held. A week later, the Young Men's Library and Reading Rooms Association was formed and its constitution was read and adopted. The immediate task before the officers was to try to put the association on a sound financial basis, and to start they had the great advantage of intertwining offices with other important organizations in town. They tried solving the financial problem through the tapping of Civil War funds of various kinds, library subscription tickets, lectures, and social activities. Clara Barton, "the Florence Nightingale of the Union Army," spoke on "Work and Incidents of Army Life" at one of the lectures held on the top floor of the Whittlesey Block (The Firelands Pioneer 1984, Third Series Vol. V, 28).

On March 6, 1866 the Whittlesey Academy of Arts and Sciences agreed to lend the use of its bookcases and all books in its possession at that time or after acquired, to the Young Men's Library and Reading Rooms Association; to appropriate $500 from the current fund and thereafter not less than $50 annually to be spent under its direction for the benefit of the library. The loan of books consisted of 1,554 volumes, a number of which had been presented to the Academy by Washington Irving. Mrs. Samuel T.

Worcestor donated one hundred volumes to build the collection. These two gifts formed the nucleus for the new library.

During the Civil War there were four societies in Norwalk working for soldiers' aid; two of women (Soldiers' Aid Society and The Union Aid Society), one of girls in their teens (the Alert Club), and the Christian Commission. These societies gave the new Library Association $1,050 which was used to purchase the first shelves and the first order of books. Later Judge and Mrs. Worcestor (founders of the Alert Club) gave the Association $1,900 to be kept on interest until the Association was ready to build.

The Whittlesey Academy was appointed to look into the problem of securing rooms for the new organization. The library's first home (1866) was in the Old Mansion Block over Little & Son Hardware (now the Gift Gallery Inc.). In 1868 there were 2623 volumes in the library plus the leading newspapers of the time. The library had no available card catalog and if a patron wanted a book, he or she browsed along the shelves of books until the one wanted was found. Miss Sophia Rowland became the first librarian and served for thirty-three years. She believed in enforcing the word "Silence" in the library.

The library soon outgrew its walls several more times while occupying rooms in various places. On June 16, 1897, the Firelands' Historical Society voted on, and passed, the proposal by Hon. R. R. Sloane that the Society and the Library Association pool their money and efforts to secure a joint building to provide a home for both organizations. Mr. Francis B. Case owned the lot where the library now stands at West Main and Case Avenue. In

1899, when he learned that these groups were looking for a building, he made the price low enough so the trustees could purchase it for $5,000. Whittlesey Academy paid $4,000; the Firelands' Historical Society and the Library Association paid $500 each. From the beginning, these three organizations have been completely dependent upon each other. The sole object of this triad of benefactors was educational and for the advancement of the citizens of Norwalk (Edwards 1953, 7-8). In 1900, the Library finally moved into the dwelling on the lot formerly owned by Dr. William Kittredge, after it was remodeled. It was used as a library and museum until 1903-04 when the present library building was built. Miss Mattie Husted was the librarian at this location from 1900 to 1905.

Supporters of the library decided to correspond with Andrew Carnegie in 1902. Mr. Benjamin F. Stewart, a local barber, added a personal message to tne correspondence going to his past employer, Andrew Carnegie. This caught Carnegie's attention. On February 3, 1903 Norwalk received its reply granting a gift of $15,000 to build a $25,000 free public library building (see Appendix A). Carnegie required the city to maintain the library at the cost of not less than ten per cent of his gift or $1,500 and provide a suitable site for the building. The three previously mentioned organizations provided the other $10,000 for the building.

In 1903 the house on the lot was removed and the present library erected. Mr. Frank L. Packard of Columbus was secured as the architect and Mr. George Feick of Sandusky was the preferred

contractor. J. Charles Hahne and his brothers, J. D. and Albert of Dayton, were hired to do the beautiful art work on the wall and ceiling decorations. The interior of the library was described as the following:

1) The wood work is principally in cathedral oak with smooth hard finish and handsome grain, rich in color and design.

2) The main reading room stretching east and west through the building on the upper floor, is decorated in terra cotta, ivory and gold with pleasing blending of colors. At both east and west ends are massive fireplaces with oak mantles. In the center, under the dome, around the entire room, are the names in gilt of famous authors in both prose and poetry, such as Shakespeare, Bancroft, Hugo, Scott, Hawthorne, Irving, Longfellow, and Goethe.

3) The two front reading rooms, the west one for children, with an abundance of light, are decorated in seal green, ivory and gold in renaissance style or ornamentation in relief work.

4) In the two entrances or hall rooms the ceilings are done in tiger yellow with low blended colors, while the side walls are finished in deep cardinal red. The ceilings are also relieved by beautiful renaissance ornamentations with four shields and scroll work artistically worked out.

5) The trustees' or reference room at the east, between the center and the stack rooms, is done in warm olive tone, design in Empire order.

6) The librarian's room opposite, is furnished in pearl gray, blue and old rose designs, in Empire order. In the large, long stack room at the extreme north end of the upper floor, the color treatment is chamois yellow, of various shades, ornamented design in renaissance.

7) In the basement at the south end in the auditorium, the finish is to be in seal brown; the center or lobby is decorated in light yellow, while the north room or historical room, is to be done in buff. (Norwalk Reflector, January 17, 1905, 6)

The building was completed and opened to the public on May 10, 1905 (see Appendixes B, C, and D); the new public library became the permanent home of the Young Mens' Library and Reading Rooms Association on the main floor and the Fireland's Historical Society which shared the use of all the rooms and conveniences of the

basement with the Association, except the north room which was the Society's museum. The Whittlesey Academy donated the land for the building. (Until 1992, the lot where the Public Library stands was in the name of the Whittlesey Academy of Arts and Sciences.) The first patron registered was Edward Cripps who checked out Mrs. Peary's My Artic Journal. The total cost of the building came to $28,440.50 (The Firelands Pioneer 1980, Third Series Vol. I, 2). The first librarian in the new building was Mrs. Frances B. Linn (1905-1906). The library was now thoroughly organized; the next problem to solve was how to increase its efficiency and widen its influence. In the 1905 annual report, Mrs. Linn stated that her greatest hope was in interesting the students of the local schools in the reference department, and through them reaching the parents in their homes. At this time she was planning to speak to the High School on the relationship of the School and the library. She was also thinking about starting a story-telling hour for the little ones.

By the end of 1906, the library had registered 2,088 patrons. The total circulation reached 29,871, making an average circulation of 98 books a day. The slowing down of circulation was expected, due to the novelty of the library in 1905 and the small amount of new book purchases in 1906. Reference work was heavy; present resources failed to meet the demands. Reference books were gathered together and a special room fitted for the use of students. The reading room was especially popular. There seemed to be very few reasons to keep the library open after 8:30 p.m., except on Saturday night. There seemed to be a popular desire to

have the reading room open on Sunday afternoons. Miss Marian Cummings was the librarian from 1906-1908.

The 1907 annual report still showed circulation down. Books were wearing out faster than new ones being purchased; as a result, the book shelves looked ragged, dismantled, and uninviting. Children's literature accounted for 22.4 per cent of the whole circulation. (The whole Children's Department was merely a separate stack for books.) The library needed a separate room for the children with low stacks, tables and chairs, bulletin boards, and an hour for story-telling in the future. The first inventory was taken; twenty-two books lost, 6,167 books remained in the collection.

In 1908 the citizens of Norwalk increased the use of library resources which demonstrated the constantly, increasing value and usefulness of the library to the public. In 1909 scholars began independent studies with books. Book lists were put in the daily newspapers. The library did a lot of rebinding of books that year.. Miss Lucy E. Strutton was the head librarian from 1908-1922.

In 1911 the cataloging was almost completed. It was not always possible to supply patrons with what they requested; it was not for lack of willing effort on the part of the librarian, but lack of materials on account of a limited book budget. It was decided that the privileges of the library be discontinued to residents outside of the city, unless satisfactory arrangements were made with the township trustees for giving the proper support.

By 1912 the librarian was making $50 a month in salary. The Firelands' Historical Rooms (museum in the basement) were now open

to the public. In 1917 there was a great demand for books on World War I. The library sent books, magazines, and money to the War Library Commission. In 1918 the library accumulated any material dealing with the history of Huron County for the State Historical Commission of Ohio. In 1919 a bequest from the Benjamin Nyman estate meant the difference between barely existing and scraping and very modest buying at the library. In 1922 Miss Bertha Butler became head librarian (from 1922-1948). In 1923 the library established a collection of light fiction which was rented for two cents a day. The purchase of children's table and chairs through the generosity of the community clubs and individuals was a pleasant surprise in 1924. The Children's Department was now located between the two stack sections in the North Reading Room. This provided a special spot in the library for the boys and girls to recognize the library as a place in which to stay and enjoy themselves.

In 1925 the library offered its first Vacation Reading Club for children ages 6-14. Another way of bringing good books and children together had been by placing classroom libraries in all the school rooms. Interlibrary Loan was arranged with the State Library. Since the library's book budget was very limited, renting the light fiction collection allowed the library to build this type of collection. After the initial cost was paid for the books, they were then placed on the free shelf to circulate. The value of local history was stressed through displays; visitors and local patrons showed a lot of interest.

The Association continued to conduct a public library until

1926, but it seemed they were continually in financial difficulties. A quotation from the Norwalk Reflector Herald, January 15, 1925, on page one is quite revealing: "That only $200, stands between the Norwalk Public Library and closed doors, was the startling information that came to the surface at last night's annual meeting of the YML&RRA." Another excerpt from the Reflector Herald, January 14,1926, on page one is equally enlightening: "For years, the library has been handicapped by a shortage of maintenance funds and the excellent service it has rendered the community has been in spite of the almost hand to mouth existence it has been forced to lead. The extreme necessity of closing the library for several months each year has been considered."

The next important stage in the development of the library came on February 9, 1926 when, by the joint action of the City Board of Education and the Association under the provision of Section 7635-7640-1 of the Ohio Code, the Association became the Norwalk City School District Public Library which enabled it to levy taxes for the maintenance of the library.

Also in 1926 the Children's books were carefully examined; objectionable and unwholesome books were withdrawn. Children's books were now being published in a much more satisfactory form. The staff of the library reorganized the Norwalk High School Library by classifying the books according to Dewey. The library tried displaying books to help improve circulation in 1927. The library needed many improvements in the way of furnishings (see Appendixes E,F, and G); new steel stacks were set up for the unbound magazines to make them easier to access and use. The High

School library was completely reorganized. The senior class of Norwalk High School was successful with its story hour on Saturday afternoons. The vertical file was established for pamphlets, bulletins, and clippings. All children living outside the library district, but attending Norwalk Public Schools, were given free use of the library. In May 1928 the roof needed temporary repairs.

The constant call for up-to-date information which was usually found in magazines justified the money spent on them. The most current magazines were able to answer political, social, economic, financial, literary, and historical questions in 1928. Children's circulation made up 25.1 per cent of the total circulation. The people of Norwalk displayed a spirit of helpfulness and appreciation toward their library, and the figures of 1928 showed that more than ever they were looking to the library for general information as well as recreational reading. The world wide movement toward progress in education through reading, under the name of adult education, was fostered by the Norwalk Public Library through book collections, reading lists, and the Reading with a Purpose series. The booklets belonging to the series offered practical aid to the many adults who were looking for self improvement. Miss Butler was empowered to employ substitutes as needed at a salary of $15 per week for full-time and forty cents per hour for part-time. In 1929 the rental fee on light fiction was stopped. At the close of 1929, the population in Norwalk was 7,775 (according to 1930 census) and the circulation was up to 52,943. Non-fiction reading had increased. A total of 15,336 of the total circulation was attributed to juvenile materials.

Improving reading habits of the young people would insure a generation of intelligent readers of tomorrow. An exhibit of good books for children was held at the library during Good Book Week in November (It is now called the Children's Book Week.). This gave the parents an opportunity to see the kind of books their children could expect to find at the library.

Miss Butler stated in the 1929 Annual Report that the modern public library believed in bringing books and people together--that it should find a reader for every book on its shelves and provide a book for every reader in its community. The library is still for all, young and old, for those of limited knowledge as well as those who were scholarly. An institution that is such an important element in the city life should have the generous support of every citizen, and each year the people of Norwalk showed a greater friendliness toward their library and a greater interest in its welfare became apparent.

In 1930 the staff was increased to three. This was a period of industrial depression and scarcity of work always sent many of the unemployed and their families to the library, because of more leisure time and less money to spend for recreation. The circulation increased greatly. A library through its books and service should give education, information, recreation, and inspiration to all. A good library furnished the opportunity and the means to improve a patron's education.

Patrons were requesting detective, mystery, and western stories, but a change to historical and biographical novels was gradually happening in 1931. The work in the Children's Department

was limited by the lack of a children's librarian. Regular story telling could not be provided at this time. In 1932 there was a severe shortage of funds. Only sixty-three new adult and thirty-four Children's books were purchased for the year. Summer Reading Club was omitted. Miss Butler told stories on Saturday mornings to maintain children's interests in reading.

In 1934 the library was permitted to receive support from the intangibles tax; it required the library to be a public library open to all residents of the county. School libraries could not participate. School district public libraries could. Under the law it provided for the Board of Education to organize a School District Public Library; such a library should be managed and controlled by a Board of seven Trustees, appointed by the Board of Education to serve seven years (Section 4840-1). A Board of Education is powerless to direct the policy of the Board of the Library established by authority of General Code Section 7635. Also in 1934, a linoleum was laid to cover the upper floor.

In 1937 a new floor covering of brown cork carpeting for the main reading room was laid. This decreased the noise to a minimum. The rest of the floor was still linoleum. Forty-seven classroom libraries were set up in the school rooms. Fiction books were in great demand. Many books were being repaired or sent to the bindery. In 1938 the Board accepted the Public Employees Retirement Board's pension plan.

The most important improvement in the library for many years took place in 1939. Mr. Tom O'Donnell installed the new lighting system in the stack room. It was then easier to browse the

shelves. In 1942 the Board discussed the following: keeping the library open until 9 p.m.; keeping the library open on Sundays; a new restroom for the public; the library custom of taking requests for books; and the installation of a phone. In March 1942 the phone system was installed. In May 1943 the library started using a general switchboard to turn the lights on or off, thus, making sure that every light was off in the building at night. Mrs. Grace M. Pritchard's estate left $4,000 to the library to be invested in United States G. Bonds. Only the interest was to be used for general maintenance and operation of the library. The Junior High library was reorganized by the staff of the public library.

In June, 1944 the following needed repairs on the Library building were discussed: have the furnace inspected by the Hartford Company; have the brick all around the building pointed up; have the glass in the front door and vestibule made secure; have the front steps repaired; have a cement walk built on the street lawn; and have the walk on Case Avenue repaired.

On May 21, 1946 the motion was carried that books would not be checked out to anyone owing an outstanding fine or to any member of that household, starting on July 1. In 1947 the library opened a savings account for the purpose of accumulating enough money to purchase a much needed furnace. Miss Frances Edwards became the Head Librarian from 1948-1963. In 1949 a one mill levy for five years for current operating expenses for the library was put before the voters and passed. Also the first memorial book was purchased by Mrs. Anna Lee and Mr. & Mrs. Stanley Brooks of North Fairfield for Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Hoyt of Norwalk. Since Mr. Hoyt was a farmer,

the book Rural Life In the United States by C. C. Taylor was chosen as the first memorial book. This was the beginning of a fund which would enable people to present books to the library as a memorial to deceased friends and family. (This fund is still in existence today.)

From 1950-1953 the roof continued to leak. In February of 1951 the Board discussed renovating the lighting system. The estimated cost was $6,000 for fixtures and labor, $200 for wiring, plus 8% for the engineer. The roof also needed repair. Other remodeling projects included: the workroom and office, lowering the mantels, installing a door, painting rooms before shelves and cabinets were installed, building cabinets and bookshelves, installing a sink, putting a door between the museum and the rest of the basement, and covering radiators. The building project had started in 1947 and was still not completed. In 1951 the staff were granted leaves of absence and sick leave for illness or deaths in the family by the board.

May 9, 1952 was the first time any members of the Board of Trustees had been able to attend a meeting other than their own board meetings. Two went to the Northwest District of the OLA held in Fremont. On November 10, 1952 Mrs. Myra Carpenter was appointed Children's Librarian, effective January 1, 1953. In 1954, Mrs. Carpenter was providing preschool story time, bibliographic instruction, and story times in the city parks in the summer. Plans for the installation of the gas furnace were in progress. Miss Frances Edwards presented a report on the cost of the renovation from 1950-1953 which totaled $30,595.54; it included

equipment, furniture, and improvements plus repairs to the building. The renovation from 1950-1953 seemed to have no end since the renovation of 1954-1959 for the basement had begun. On December 7, 1954 the motion was approved by the Board that gave the staff a bonus of two holidays by closing the library on December 24 and December 31.

In June of 1956 the roof continued to leak. In 1957 the museum of the Firelands Historical Society moved out of the basement to its new location next door. The Association agreed to lease the basement from the Firelands Historical Society for $30.00 a month and to provide heat for the Society's building next door. The library levied a one-mill tax for a period of two years for the purpose of providing funds for renovating and furnishing the basement; two-thirds of it was to be used as the Children's Department. Mr. Thurman J. Peabody was asked to be the architect for the project. The funds for renovating the basement were hard to come by. By the end of 1959, the basement had restrooms, a book lift was constructed, certain walls were removed and steel beams installed to support the building; and the lighting of the office and the work room was completed. The main problem was how to finance the completion and the furnishing of the Children's Department.

The years 1960 to 1994 have been presented as decades in this research paper. Through the early 1960s there was not enough money to finish the basement project. Miss Edward's primary purpose in promoting and encouraging the use of the library as a cultural and civic center was to promote public relations; the use of the

basement was free to groups. A portion of the $2696.84 from the Louise Huber bequest was used to continue the work in the basement. Overdue items and unpaid fines were rapidly growing. Major steps were instituted to overcome this situation: overdue fines rose to five cents a day per item; no renewals were done by phone; patrons with overdue items would eventually see their name in the local newspaper; and then they had thirty days to return the items or be prosecuted. A goal for 1963 was to complete the Children's Room thanks to the generous bequest of Miss Nellie Parmelee in the amount of $27,925.50. Also in 1963 the Edna Maye Frank Estate named the Library, DAR, and the Hospital; as beneficiaries; each would receive about $10,000. The Children's Room officially opened September 8, 1964.

Miss Frances Edwards resigned; Mrs. Eunice Russakov became the Acting Director from June 1963 to March 1964. Mrs. Russakov explained the need of a young adult book stack. In May 1964 the joints at the west corner of the building were fixed. As usual, the roof needed repair. Mrs. Enid Denham became the Head Librarian in March 1964 and remained in that position to July 1976. In 1967 the main floor of the library was sagging badly; the building was jacked up and additional supports were added.

In the early 1970s the Board of Trustees endorsed the "Freedom to Read Statement" and the "Library Bill of Rights" adopted by the American Library Association. (The "New Library Bill of Rights" adopted by the Intellectual Freedom Committee of the ALA was later endorsed by the board in 1982.) A proposal to abolish the intangibles tax and replace it by a percentage of the state income

tax was discussed by the Ohio legislators in order to improve the funding of libraries. The roof needed repair again. Paperback books were added to the collection. Mrs. Denham announced that the Cooperative Reference Plan with Toledo-Lucas County Public Library as the library's resource center was in effect.

During the middle 1970s the library started using the Gaylord automated charging system. The staff stamped book cards in the Gaylord charger machine and put date due cards in the book pockets inside the back covers of the books. The roof and the dome needed repair but it was questionable as to whether there were federal funds available to finance such repairs. The library tried for a Grant-In-Aid Historic Preservation Grant, but was turned down. Mrs. Gildes Witter was the Acting Director from July 1976 to September 1976; Mrs. Judith Born became the Director from October 1976 to June 1979.

During the late 1970s, a LSCA (Library Services and Construction Act) Grant application was discussed by the board. The board had realized the need for extending library service to those people not being adequately served by the library, and establishing special programs for delivering books to the home-bound. The library also needed to provide educational programs for special groups and the general public. The Norwalk Public Library received a $14,180 LSCA grant from the State Library of Ohio to provide the funds for the outreach services needed for the community. Special sections were incorporated into the collection: preschool, science-fiction, and young adult. Magnifying rulers, large print books and magazines, and talking books were made

available for patron use.

In 1978 the overdue fine rose to ten cents per day on adult materials and dropped to two cents per day on children's materials. Childbirth and sex education books would only be checked out to patrons with an adult library card. In June 1979, Mrs. Born resigned, and once again, Mrs. Gildes Witter was the Acting Director to October 1979. By the end of the 1970s, the estimated total for building repair was $119,500. The building had suffered considerably from water damage due to the deterioration of the roof and dome. The following repairs were needed: a new roof, gutters, flashing; dome repairs; masonry restoration, electrical repairs, storm windows and new doors; carpeting the upstairs, interior decorating, curtains; plumbing and heating; and painting and plastering. William D. Koster, a Cleveland architect familiar with renovating Carnegie library buildings, was contacted to discuss the Norwalk building. Miss Gladys Irene Hall became the Director from October 1979 to September 1982.

The early 1980s covered a massive renovation by the firm of Koster and Holtzheimer of Cleveland. The estimated cost for the renovation project was $764,000. The budget was very slim. The library put a bond issue on the November 1981 ballot for $641,000 to provide for the repair, modification and renovation of the library. The bond issue passed and ran for ten years at an estimated 10% interest rate. There was an urgent need for funding due to plaster falling from the weakened ceilings in some of the library's public rooms. The cost of the plaster work was covered by a grant from the Ohio Historical Society Emergency Matching

Grant and the local Ernsthausen Foundation. The library board asked the Norwalk City Council for Revenue Sharing Funds to be used for the repair of the dome. Miss Irene Hall resigned; Mrs.Myra Carpenter was the Interim Director from October 1982 through March 1983. Mrs. Jeannette Freeman made the request to have the painting of Edward Cripps (the first library patron), owned by the Norwalk City Schools, loaned to the library for an extended period of time. Miss Laureen Drapp was hired as the new Director in April 1983.

By June 1983 the Norwalk Public Library was completing an extensive remodeling and restoration project which included an addition of 1200 square feet. The following were added to the existing building: a mezzanine and solarium, an elevator, offices, restrooms, and the building was made accessible to the physically challenged. The exterior was renovated to fit with the city's West Main Historic District, and the dome was relined and covered with copper. A new children's reading room was also finished in the basement. The grand opening celebration of the newly renovated library was held on Sunday, October 2, 1983.

Miss Drapp applied for the Computer Literacy Project through the LSCA Grant program. The library purchased two Apple IIe computers with printers and software for patron use with the grant money. Also in 1984, Miss Laureen Drapp recommended that the name of the library be changed from the Norwalk City School District Public Library to the Norwalk Public Library; the board made a motion and it was passed. The board asked Miss Drapp to write up job descriptions for library assistants, children's librarian, student assistant, and custodian; the board reviewed

them later and adopted them.

The late 1980s brought some pleasant surprises. Norweld provided a fax machine for the library through a federal grant. When the Strawberry Festival Committee disbanded, a gift of $6,083.64 was given to the library; a 16mm movie projector was purchased with some of the gift. On May 26, 1987 the library received news that the Ruth A. McCrillis Estate had bequested the library $110,151.37 with no restrictions. The Board of Trustees established the Ruth A. McCrillis Endowment Fund. The board's five year plan required improving basic library services offered to the community through Children's services, reference capability, the use of automated techniques in small libraries for business purposes and for community education. Roger Smith and Associates built the new shelving for the Children's Room in 1989. By the end of the 1980s the board was seriously looking at technology and automation.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the board reexamined and revised the personnel manual, and the policies and procedures of the library; the motion to adopt them was passed. Miss Drapp asked to seek several proposals for a feasibility study of automation and the cost of the study. One proposal on automation of all library operations estimated the cost at $75,000 which included installation, equipment, and training. The bequest of Ruth A. McCrillis helped the library tremendously by providing the funds for the automation project. Inventory and weeding were done before retrospective conversion started in June 1991.

The roof was still in need of repair. A new fire alarm system

was installed that would be monitored at the fire station. Smoke and heat detectors were also installed. An unattended children policy was adopted by the board. In 1992 the Whittlesey Academy was dissolved; the library was deeded the portion of land on which the library building stands. The board approved the Gaylord "Galaxy" for the integrated automation system during May 1993. The retrospective conversion process was finished by July 1993. The equipment was installed and the staff received training in late November. Although the collection was not completely barcoded at this time, December 1, 1993 was the official starting date for the new library automation system. The staff started issuing new barcoded library cards.

At the end of 1993 the total circulation was 176,370. It was made up of the following: adult books - 67,103; children's books - 59,602; videocassettes - 22,337; and miscellaneous - 27,328. New items added to the collection were 5,737. The staff answered 30,646 reference questions. The library has registered 9,808 patrons.

The Board of Trustees has prepared the Norwalk Public Library for the challenges ahead in advanced technology, so that the library would survive through the twenty first century and not become extinct.

# APPENDIX A

Andrew Carnegie,
3 East 91st. St., N.Y.
Feb. 3, 1903.

B. F. Stewart, Esq.,
Norwalk, Ohio

Dear Sir:

Responding to your communication in behalf of Norwalk. If the City agrees by resolutions of council to maintain a free public library at cost of not less than $1500 a year, and provide a suitable site for the building, Mr. Carnegie will be pleased to furnish $15,000 to erect a free public library building for Norwalk.

Respectfully yours,

Jas. Bertram,
P. Secretary.

All of Mr. Carnegie's replies are recorded in the Firelands' Pioneer, v. 12-15, page 1135-1161.

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APPENDIX B

HEAD LIBRARIANS

| | |
|---|---|
| Miss Sophia Rowland | 1866 - 1899 |
| Miss Mattie Husted | 1900 - 1905 |
| Mrs. Frances B. Linn (new building) | 1905 - 1906 |
| Miss Marian Cummings | 1906 - 1908 |
| Miss Lucy E. Strutton | 1908 - 1922 |
| Miss Bertha Butler | 1922 - 1948 |
| Miss Frances Edwards | 1948 - 1963 |
| Mrs. Eunice Russakov (Acting Director) | June 1963 - Mar. 1964 |
| Mrs. Enid Denham | Mar. 1964 - July 1976 |
| Mrs. Gildes J. Witter (Acting Director) | July 1976 - Sept. 1976 |
| Mrs. Judith A. Born | Oct. 1976 - June 1979 |
| Mrs. Gildes J. Witter (Acting Director) | June 1979 - Oct. 1979 |
| Miss Gladys Irene Hall | Oct. 1979 - Sept. 1982 |
| Mrs. Myra Carpenter (Interim Director) | Oct. 1982 - Mar. 1983 |
| Miss Laureen Drapp | Apr. 1983 - Aug. 1994 |

APPENDIX C

# Norwalk Public Library

Dwelling Used as Library—1899-1903

New Public Library—1905



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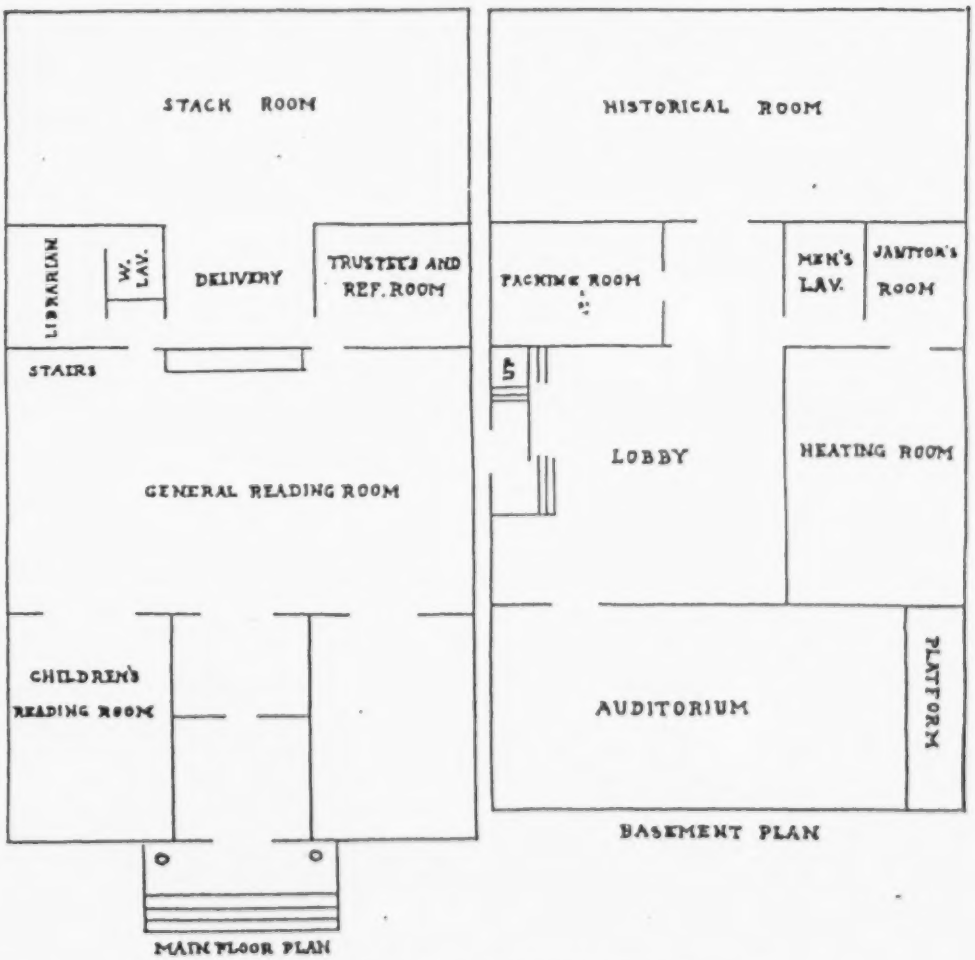
Adams, Mozelle M.
The Story of Early Norwalk

# APPENDIX D






TRACING FROM ORIGINAL PUBLISHED IN
THE NORWALK REFLECTOR-HERALD JANUARY 17, 1903.

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Norwalk Daily Reflector 5-11-1905

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APPENDIX E

# THE LIBRARY OPENING

## Wednesday Evening Was Attended by Hundreds of Admiring Citizens

Wednesday night all roads led to the new Library, the informal opening of which was held that evening. Hundreds of Norwalk citizens wended their way to the new and handsome building, which had been thrown open to the public for inspection. While there yet remain a number of things to be done before a final state of completion is reached, there has been enough done to show to the public what our beautiful city has received through the warm heart and generous purse of the world's great philanthropist and broad-minded Scotchman, Andrew Carnegie.

The interior of the building, the upper or main rooms, were ablaze with lights, both gas and electric, and the scene was one of beauty to the visitors who swarmed the building, a description of which has already been fully given in The Reflector.

All visitors were received in a cordial manner by the committee of trustees, who showed their guests through the different rooms. The librarians, Mrs. Francis B. Linn and Miss Lucy Stratton, were cordial in their attentions and won the good opinion of everybody.

Owing to the fact that the basement rooms are not yet ready for inspection they were not opened to the public Wednesday evening.

Thursday morning inaugurated the drawing of books and the first person to be registered for a drawing was Edward Cripps, who selected a copy of "My Arctic Journal," by Mrs. Peary, wife of Captain Peary of arctic expedition fame. Mr. Cripps goes on record, therefore, as the first person to patronize the new Carnegie library, the drawing being made at 10:10 Thursday morning, May 11th.

# AMONG THE CLUBS

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# APPENDIX F

Board Minutes
June 1927

Toledo, Ohio
June 6, 1927

Norwalk Public Library,
Norwalk, Ohio.

Committee on Redecorating:

We are pleased to submit the following memorandum for redecorating the Norwalk Public Library, as hereinafter specified:-

EAST FRONT READING ROOM:

Wash off all the old water color, point up cracks and thoroughly prepare the side walls and ceiling. Plaster cornice to be completely restored. Side walls and ceiling to be finished in lead and oil treatment, side walls to be finished in a sponged effect. Cornice to be brought out in its natural details glazed and high lighted in gold.

WEST FRONT READING ROOM:

To be treated in a like manner.

VESTIBULE:

Walls to be washed and thoroughly prepared. Ceiling to be finished in gold metal overlay effect and glazed. Side walls to be finished in oil, and on the two opposite walls (right and left) we propose to paint two decorative motifs, as described to the Committee. Cornice to be glazed to harmonize with the scheme.

LOBBY ENTRANCE:

Side walls and ceiling to be washed and thoroughly prepared. Ceiling to be finished gold metal overlay effect and glazed. Side walls to be finished in oil, and cornice wiped out to harmonize.

MAIN LOBBY:

All the water color to be washed off and side walls and ceiling to be thoroughly prepared. All wall and ceiling surfaces to be given a lead and oil paint treatment, and side walls up to the cornice line to be sponged in a contrasting color effect. Cove on the ceiling above the main wall cornice to be finished in a blend effect. Soffits of the ceiling tracery to be laid in gold metal leaf effect, on which we propose to lay a decorative treatment.



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# APPENDIX G

Board Minutes
June 1927
(page 2)



The four ceiling panels surrounding the dome will be carried out with a corner ornamented decoration with corresponding tracery to emphasize and beautify the ceiling. The main wall cornice we propose to finish in oil and glaze out to harmonize with the decorative effect of the ceiling.

LOBBY BETWEEN REFERENCE ROOM:

Ceiling to be carried out in metal leaf effect. Side walls to be finished in oil.

EAST REFERENCE ROOM:

Side walls and ceiling to be thoroughly prepared and finished in lead and oil. We propose to paint in a cornice effect at the angle and decorate as proposed to the Committee.

WEST ROOM OR OFFICE WITH CONNECTING HALLWAY &LAVATORY:

Side walls and ceiling to be thoroughly prepared and refinished in lead and oil.

MAIN LIBRARY BOOK ROOM:

Side walls and ceiling to be thoroughly prepared and finished in lead and oil treatment in tones as described. We propose to break the side wall with a border, as explained.

Radiators throughout all the rooms mentioned to be finished to harmonize with each room decoration.

All the above mentioned work to be done in a workmanlike manner for the sum of - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - $2300.00

This estimate is in accordance with written specifications, including all expense items pertaining to our workmen and also all the necessary scaffolding and equipment for executing the work, together with liability insurance protection.

Thanking you for the opportunity of submitting this estimate, we remain

Yours very truly,
THE HOWARD P. [illegible] COMPANY
per [signature]

Estimate Labor

Estimate Materials & Expense 1750.00
550.00

Certified Check $115.00 Enclosed.

CB:MH



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